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ISSUE 144 | APRIL/MAY 2017

Dragon hunting at Spindleberry Nature Park

CHILDREN from Windale Primary School visited a huge new living dragon that is being made from live willow in Spindleberry Nature Park. The artist in residence is Stuart Turner (*pictured above*), and the dragon weaves its way through the start of the Park from Windale Avenue. Children took part in a variety of activities including decorating colourful wooden dragon scales and a dragon Treasure Hunt.

A strong and stable future for The Dovecote

THE future of one of the Leys most important and valued community resources is looking much brighter, following the news that it has become a Charity Incorporated Organisation.

The development is a major achievement for the Dovecote Centre and brings with it the potential for much needed security and stability for the future.

Centre manager Carol Richards said: "Achieving our Charity Incorporated Organisation status is a major accomplishment for it us, one of which we are extremely proud of. It has been a long and at times arduous journey.

"There have been many obstacles we have had to overcome and there have been many times when we thought we would never achieve our goal of becoming a CIO. This development will give our project a stronger foundation in which to grow. It brings with it improved stability, offering reassurance to potential funders and donors along with giving us access to new funding sources needed to secure the long-term future of the project."

The Dovecote Centre is a well-established play resource started in 1996, and is a purpose built under eight's building. Dovecote Voluntary Parent Committee is made up of local parents who came together as a constituted group in 1996 to help meet the needs of children, young people, children with impairment and families living in the Leys experiencing multi deprivations and social exclusion.

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LEYS NEWS ISSUE 144

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If you would like to volunteer as part of our team and help to produce your local, independent newspaper please email the editor (details below) for more information and an informal chat about how you can help.

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ANNOUNCEMENT

You are cordially invited to attend the

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of Leys News Limited

Wednesday 14 June 2017, 7pm
Leys News Office
26 Kingfisher Green, Blackbird Leys
Oxford OX4 7BX

Light refreshments will be available

R.S.V.P.
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A strong and stable future for The Dovecote

Continued from front page

The Dovecote is also the original home of Leys News. Carol added: "We have a really dedicated committee, and members are dedicated and committed in ensuring that all children, including children with impairments and young people of the Leys, have access to good quality low cost out of school play facilities.

"Project users, the local community and organisations have been at the heart of project developments over the 21 years that we have been operating. User involvement in the design, delivery and management of services to meet locally identified need rather than externally perceived needs has been fundamental to its effectiveness and successful outcomes."

The guiding principle underlying all the centre's work is consultation with, and involvement of children, young people and families.

A VIBRANT, FUN RESOURCE

Carol added: "A key aim is to maximise the use of the Dovecote as a valuable community resource. For Dovecote to be a vibrant, fun, local community resource owned by the community in which it seeks to serve – whose lives it enhances.

In 1996 staff initiated the delivery of an afterschool session once a week, a one week Easter play scheme and a two-week summer play scheme. With the commitment and dedication of the Dovecote Voluntary Parent Committee, volunteers and staff, the centre has since gone on to offer the following services:

- An afterschool club running three sessions per week for 16 children per sessions aged four to 12 years old
- Easter and summer play schemes for up to 40 children per session
- Easter and summer Dovecote Afloat narrow boat project (sadly this project has come to end at the end of August 2017)
- Weekly Stay and Play sessions for young mums and dads with young children
- Purpose built sensory room for children with impairments and their families
- Support sessions for families with children with impairments
- Strong partnership work with a wide range of voluntary and statutory organisations supporting vulnerable children and families
- Partnership with Parasol and Mable Pritchard School to support local young children with impairments experiencing exclusion to accessing services to participate in our services providing them with the support they need
- Setting up Leys News
- Provide support, training and volunteering opportunities
- Extension of centre garden providing a larger outside play area
- Creation of a new memorial garden sensory dedicated to Val Smith and new wild life area to be opened later this month.

Carol added: "The Dovecote project has always strived to deliver various play and social activities and opportunities that will stimulate and stretch the abilities of children and young people. We deliver low cost facilities enabling access for all the families living on the Leys estate, and provide a safe and secure environment, a focus point for children to gain support and build positive lasting friendships.

"Children and young people have access a wide range of activities where they can enhance and develop skills. The Dovecote is also a much-needed place for children with impairments to socialise with other children and young people living in their community."

Watch out for details of the Dovecote's new website which is currently being designed. Soon residents will be able to logon and keep up to date with current and future exciting developments.

■ **For more information search for The Dovecote Centre on Facebook and Like their page.**

Nominations now open for Oxford's unsung heroes

NOMINATIONS are open for the annual Certificate of Honour Awards which celebrates the invaluable work of Oxford's voluntary community.

Oxford City Council is appealing for your help to find the unsung heroes in our city whose compassion and dedication make a vast difference to the lives of so many. We hope that members of the public will take the time to nominate someone they know who deserves praise and recognition for their voluntary work.

The Lord Volunteers are critical to the wellbeing of our city and play a major role in achieving the positive aims we all hold for our families, friends and wider community. From voluntary participation in local activities to personal care of family, friends or neighbours, the act of volunteering stimulates a sense of community in a city that is constantly growing and diversifying.

All nominations will be considered by a panel of independent judges; the Lord Mayor of Oxford, Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire and the Chief Executive of Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action (OCVA).

Nominees do not have to live in Oxford, but the service and support they provide must be carried out within the city over a substantial period of time. Full terms and conditions can be found of the City Council's website and are detailed on the nomination forms.

The closing date for nominations is 4pm on Wednesday 12 April.

This year's winners will be invited to an awards ceremony hosted by the Lord Mayor at Oxford Town Hall in May.

■ **You can complete your nomination online at www.oxford.gov.uk/certificateofhonours. Hard copy nomination forms can also be collected from the reception desk at Oxford Town Hall or requested via email at civicoffice@oxford.gov.uk. Completed hard copies should be returned to: Certificate of Honours, Civic Office, 3rd Floor, St Aldates, Chambers, 109 St Aldates, Oxford, OX1 1DS.**

New Police and Crime plan launched

Anthony Stansfeld.

THE Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Anthony Stansfeld, has launched his new five year Police and Crime Plan for the Thames Valley. The document sets out the priorities for policing and other crime reduction organisations. It consists of five strategic priorities which are:

- **Vulnerability** – Managing demand on services through working together with a particular focus on mental health, elder abuse, hidden abuse, and the criminal justice experience for victims
- **Prevention and Early Intervention** – Improving safeguarding in both the physical and virtual space including tackling cyber crime, road safety, peer on peer abuse, hate crime and female genital mutilation (FGM)
- **Reducing Re-offending** – Targeting and managing harm and risk with a focus on substance misuse, violence involving weapons and offender management
- **Serious Organised Crime and Terrorism** – Improving the local response including increased public awareness, promoting a 'dare to share' culture, and preventing violent extremism and exploitation of vulnerable people.
- **Police Ethics and Reform** – Increasing the pace of change with a focus on improved support for victims, uptake of new technology, and improving the perceptions of police among young people

The Plan was informed by the views of nearly 5000 residents, including over 1000 young people, who took part in the PCCs policing and crime survey in 2016.

It was also developed using a broad range of information including academic research, analysis of crime trends and consultation with partners including the police and local authorities.

Anthony Stansfeld said: "Demand on policing and community safety issues have changed over the last few years and my new plan reflects this. The Plan focuses on many new and emerging issues for policing but crimes such as household burglary and rural crime will also remain a priority.

"Tackling new demand, as well as maintaining support for the investigation of more traditional crimes, won't be an easy task. However, as recent Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) inspections have shown, Thames Valley Police is a force we can be proud of and I have faith that they will be able to rise to this challenge and continue to safeguard the communities of Thames Valley.

"I will now be working closely with partner organisations to understand how they will address the issues identified."

■ **For more information and to view the full Police and Crime Plan visit the PCC website.**

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Blackbird Leys Parish Council

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For Parish Council information please call 01865 716943 or go to www.blackbirdleysparishcouncil.gov.uk

Community rallies after 'mindless attack'

PEOPLE across the Leys have offered their support following an act of 'mindless vandalism' at a recently opened memorial garden. Andrew Smith MP officially opened the Val Smith Memorial Garden on Saturday 25 March. The garden is dedicated to his wife Val, a local councillor who died in 2015, and also commemorates two former councillors, Barbara Gatehouse and Carole Roberts, who served the local community over many years.
Last weekend vandals ripped up ornamental glasses, trampled daffodils and left litter strewn across the garden.

Blackbird Leys Parish Council Chairman Gordon Roper, said; "I am very disappointed. This vandalism was caused by a few mindless people who have no respect for Val , Barbara and Carole who were all amazing local people who fought hard for good things for local people and their families to enjoy . I hope the vandals who have done this hang their heads in shame."
Speaking at the opening of the garden Andrew Smith said it was a fitting tribute to Val and also Carole and Barbara who were remarkable women and who cared deeply for their community.

Andrew Smith said: "This is a mindless act of vandalism, of course upsetting, but it cannot take anything away from the memories which mean so much to all three families. I am very heartened by the lovely messages of support from people in Blackbird Leys."

The garden is located next to the Leys Pool and Leisure Centre and provides a quiet and peaceful location for residents to enjoy.
It was funded by the Blackbird Leys Parish Council working closely with the Oxford City Council. Blackbird Leys Parish Council chairman Gordon Roper said: "Val was a wonderful person who dedicated herself to the local community and it is nice way to remember her good works. We also want to remember Carole and Barbara and it is lovely that we can do it in this way."

The memorial garden features three benches with the names of Val, Carole and Barbara hand carved into the wood, and a landscaped area of paths and plants surrounding the site.

Andrew Smith, Parish Council Chair Gordon Roper, family and friends.

Gordon Roper added: "We have CCTV footage from the Leisure Centre and this is being examined now in great detail. Luckily the benches remain unscathed and local people have been fantastic, offering words of support and rescuing the damaged plants so that they can be re planted soon."

■ **Anyone with any information about the vandalism should email bblparishcouncil@gmail.com**

LEYS CDI

New Clockhouse worker

A VERY warm welcome to Dawn Williams, the newly appointed Leys CDI Over 50s Clockhouse Project Worker. Please drop into the Clockhouse and say Hello to Dawn, who will start working on 10 April 2017 and is very much looking forward to meeting you.

BLACKBIRD LEYS PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Call for new Parish Councillors

BLACKBIRD Leys Parish Council is looking for new councillors to join the organisation. Parish Councillors are not employees, they are elected representatives who volunteer their time for free to work on behalf of their local parish.

You can become a Parish Councillor either by election or by co-option. Elections take place every four years, or as a by-election between scheduled elections.

Co-option is when existing Parish Councillors appoint a new member without an election. Blackbird Leys Parish Council can have a maximum of fourteen Councillors, seven in Northfield Brook and seven in Blackbird Leys Parish Wards. The Council currently has a number of vacancies they wish to fill.

Councillors meet regularly as a parish council and welcome attendance and participation from the communities they serve. Meetings are advertised through the Blackbird Leys Website and Leys News but you can contact the parish council Clerk for dates and times of the forthcoming meetings on bblparishcouncil@gmail.com

Normally at the beginning of each meeting there is an open forum for the public to put forward questions and points they wish to raise.

■ **For a nomination form please contact the Parish Clerk on 07754 271831 or bblparishcouncil@gmail.com**

Traffic Congestion at Leys Pool

THE Council has received numerous complaints about parking and traffic congestion around the Blackbird Leys Pool and Leisure Centre.

Although there is adequate free parking at the centre, many people are parking on the main roads around the vicinity and sometimes on double yellow lines.

This is creating traffic delays, congestion and inconvenience for local residents who need to access their properties. Over the coming weeks there will be more parking enforcement officers visiting the location to help combat illegal parking on double yellow lines.

BLAP wins Parish Council Grant

THE Parish Council has agreed to a grant of £1000 for the Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground (BLAP). The grant was awarded after children from BLAP put forward a number of creative ideas on how they would like to improve the play facilities.

The children requested the construction of a tree house, new mats for gymnastics and play and the repair of hanging bars. Chairman Gordon Roper said :"The children had some wonderful ideas to improve the play facilities at BLAP and we are delighted to be able to help them with the grant."

Blackbird Leys Parish Council

Next Meeting Dates:

- **Tuesday, 25 April, 7pm**
- **Tuesday, 30 May, 7pm**

Jack Argent Room, BBL Community Centre.

Parish Councillors
Gordon Roper (*Chair*), Ann Booker (*Vice Chair*), John Dillon, Chris Hatton, Daniel Jones, Peter Nowland and Pat Stannard.

Phone (9am–5pm) **07754 271831**

Email **bblparishcouncil@gmail.com**

For further details of Parish Council news, meetings, minutes and other activities in Blackbird Leys please go to the community website
www.blackbirdleysparishcouncil.gov.uk

Blackbird Leys Parish Council

Community projects set to bloom

EIGHT community based gardening projects with grants of almost £4,000 will be part of a new Oxford in Bloom Scheme, and Barns Place in Blackbird Leys is among the areas chosen.

The Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground has also been chosen as one of the projects

Under the new Oxford in Bloom scheme, residents, children and volunteers will all be given opportunities to improve access to wild flowers, vegetables, communal areas and their neighbourhoods.

Barns Place, in Blackbird Leys, is in line to receive £1,000 to enable residents to create a roof top garden aiming to attract pollinators and birds, as well as creating communal seating areas.

Incredible Edible Oxford will deliver a 'grow your own' project supporting residents in three different neighbourhoods to plant and grow sweetcorn, courgettes, and runner beans in grow bags.

Flowering bulbs will be planted at St Sepulchre's Cemetery in Jericho by volunteers from the Friends of St Sepculchre's and on the approach roundabout to Cutteslowe Park by the Harbord Road Residents Association.

Other projects set to receive money include improvements to communal gardens at Vicarage Court sheltered housing scheme, the development of a nature garden at Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground, some 'guerrilla' gardening in Meadow Lane and support for hanging baskets along London Road, Headington.

Each of these groups will now enter into the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Thames and Chiltern competition under their expanding "It's Your Neighbourhood" campaign.

Judging will be undertaken by RHS judges in July; results will be announced at the Thames and Chiltern awards ceremony in September. Linda Smith, City Executive Board Member for Leisure, Parks and Sport said: "I was delighted by the level of interest shown in this new way of running Oxford in Bloom and the Council will be supporting some fantastic community projects which I can't wait to see come to fruition.

"Oxford in Bloom is now firmly about the Council supporting local residents and community groups to roll up their sleeves and improve their local neighbourhood, while bringing people together to enjoy gardening and get closer to nature.

"We will judge the projects to be successful if they brighten up an area of the city and strengthen communities by helping neighbours to get to know each other. I'd also like to wish all the projects' success with their entry into the RHS. It's Your Neighbourhood competition. Success there would be the icing on the cake".

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Summer Fete!

Saturday 15th July — 11.30 am - 3.30 pm
St. John's Home

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Campaign launched to tackle dog fouling in Blackbird Leys

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Parish Councillor John Dillon, County Councillor Steve Curran, City Councillors Jennifer Pegg and Linda Smith.

A CAMPAIGN was launched to encourage Blackbird Leys' dog owners to clean up after their pets.

Councillors, parish councillors and City Council officers will be joined by local volunteers in speaking to dog walkers and giving out free dog poo bags. The aim of the campaign is to encourage responsible dog ownership to make Blackbird Leys' and Greater Leys' parks and opens spaces a cleaner environment for everyone.

Residents have raised concerns about dog fouling in Blackbird Leys' parks and open spaces, particularly Blackbird Leys Park and Gillian's Park. Councillor Linda Smith, Oxford City Council Councillor for Blackbird Leys and Board Member for Leisure, Parks and Sport, said: "It is important that we address residents' concerns around dog fouling in the Blackbird Leys and Greater Leys area. We want everyone to feel that they can use and enjoy their local park, which is why we're carrying out this campaign over the next two weeks."

It is an offence for dog owners not to clean up after their pets. Owners can be issued with an £80 fixed penalty notice and, if prosecuted, a court can issue a £1,000 fine.

Dog poo can be placed in bags and put in dog poo bins, which are located at entrances and exits in all Blackbird Leys' parks, or double bagged and put in litter bins.

As part of the campaign, officers and councillors will also remind dog owners of the legal requirement that all dogs are micro-chipped.

■ **Oxford residents can report dog fouling, dangerous dogs and lost and stray dogs by visiting www.oxford.gov.uk/dogs.**

Conference aims to tackle recruitment crisis

BY JOHN CHARLTON

OXFORDSHIRE'S tight labour market and low unemployment is creating major recruitment challenges for businesses. In response, employment charity Aspire Oxford is organising an employers' conference designed to help companies meet their business needs through flexible recruitment. This ground-breaking conference is called "Unlocking Potential for Oxfordshire" and takes place on Wednesday 26 April, 9.30am–2pm at Unipart. The event is held in Responsible Business Week and is the first of its kind in Oxfordshire.

"Unlocking Potential for Oxfordshire" is free to attend and promises to be an inspiring experience for any businesses interested in finding out more about flexible recruitment. Employers attending can learn about the advice and in-work support available to give them confidence in recruiting from disadvantaged groups.

Companies will also be able to hear testimonials from an excellent line-up of guest speakers. Darren Burns from Timpson is the key note speaker and leading national companies including Pret a Manger and Land Securities will talk about their own experiences of successfully recruiting disadvantaged people. The conference also includes a networking lunch. All attendees will be given a free, practical guide on how to get started with flexible recruitment. Places for the conference are going fast, with delegates such as John Lewis, the flagship store for the new Westgate Shopping Centre, already signed up.

The conference is supported by the High Sheriff of Oxfordshire, JobCentrePlus and key members of the Responsible Business Group "Reciprocate", including Allen Associates and Unipart.

Paul Roberts, Chief Operating Officer at Aspire Oxford, said: "This conference is about giving employers the confidence to recruit more flexibly, and showcasing the benefits of giving disadvantaged people a chance in the world of work. Thousands of local people in Oxfordshire want to work and could do so, given the right support."

■ **For more information and to book your place please call 01865 204450 or email rosa@aspireoxford.co.uk**

CITIZENS' ADVICE

Are you entitled to sick pay?

PEOPLE often ask us for advice on sick pay they haven't received but to which they thought they were entitled.

It seems that some unscrupulous employers avoid paying sick pay to people who are too ill to work. They do this by using tactics such as taking them off rotas and cutting their wages.

People are entitled to be paid if they are off work for four working days or more and earn more than £112 a week. However, some employers are exploiting the confusion surrounding the rules on statutory sick pay and occupational sick pay.

Tactics often used by employers include:

- Cancelling staff shifts after they call in sick, so that it looks as if they aren't intended to be working;
- Reducing staff members' working hours so they don't meet the £112 threshold;
- Saying that a GP's note is needed for even a few days off. In fact, people can actually self-certify for up to seven days.

Statutory Sick Pay is the Government's minimum level of pay for employees who are absent from work due to illness. To qualify, the employee must earn at least £112 per week and provide proof of sickness for absence exceeding seven days. Occupational Sick Pay is where an organisation chooses to provide sick pay that is more generous than the statutory minimum.

With the cold and flu season still under way, Citizens Advice is urging people who are too ill to work to check their sick pay eligibility and to seek advice if their employer won't pay.

■ **For further help, visit www.citizensadvice.org.uk, telephone 03444 111 444 or drop in to your nearest Citizens Advice.**

■ **For locations and opening hours see www.citizensadvice.org.uk/local/oxfordshire-south-vale**

■ **Citizens Advice Oxfordshire South and Vale is an independent charity. Our 150 skilled volunteer advisers and ten staff advise over 8,000 clients each year.**

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Then why not get involved in the next one?

We are always looking for local residents to write articles, send in pictures and help produce future issues of the newspaper.

To find out more email: editor@leysnews.co.uk

Spring into Easter and celebrate the season

HOWEVER you celebrate the first bank holiday of the year, the next couple of weeks mark the start of better weather, spring and Easter and the chance to legitimately over indulge in chocolate while getting very excited about bunnies and chicks!

To help your Easter get cracking (!) here are a few ideas for Easter egg hunts, and decorations that the whole family can enjoy.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

1. Easter bonnet £5 from Sainsbury's
2. Easter baskets £2 from Sainsbury's
3. Easter wreath £6 from Sainsbury's
4. Fillable eggs £1.50 from Sainsbury's
5. Felt Easter scene £2 from Sainsbury's
6. Easter bunny and chick craft kit £1.50 from Wilko
7. Easter chicks £1 from Wilko
8. Hanging decorations £4.95 from www.dotcomgiftshop.com

RECIPE CORNER

Make a Simnel Cake for Easter

BY SUZAN CROXFORD

HOW lovely that Easter falls late this year in April. We should be well in with a chance of some decent sunshine and warmer weather (or at least that's the theory!). Easter eggs and bunnies have become a symbol of the holiday and it wouldn't be Easter without indulging in chocolate.

The shops seem to have been full of all things Easter related for the past two months. And we are all drawn to that classic indulgence, an Easter egg – yummy. Well here are a few fun facts about those naughty but nice chocolate spheres:

- Eggs are a symbol of rebirth and new life. They have been associated with Easter since celebrations of the coming of spring in ancient times, long before the Christian celebrations.
- The first Easter eggs were hen or duck eggs painted with vegetable dyes and charcoal.
- The first chocolate Easter eggs for eating were produced in France and Germany in the early 19th century. They were made of solid chocolate because moulds for hollow shells had not yet been developed.
- The first Cadbury Easter eggs were made in 1875, using dark chocolate. The shell was filled with sugared almonds.
- Today, every child in the UK receives an average of 8.8 Easter eggs every year – double their recommended calorie intake for a whole week.

Perhaps we do not need any more chocolate recipes for Easter and I have had my share of new season spring lamb recipes too. I am therefore reverting back to a recipe my Grandma taught me, has stood the test of time and is delightful; I give you the Easter Simnel Cake

For the cake

- 175g/6oz light muscovado sugar
- 175g/6oz butter, softened, plus extra for greasing
- 175g/6oz self-raising flour
- 3 large free-range eggs
- 50g/1¾oz ground almonds
- 3 tbsp milk
- 100g/3½oz sultanas
- 100g/3½oz glacé cherries, quartered
- 100g/3½oz dried apricots, cut into small pieces
- 2 tsp mixed spice powder

For the topping

- 450g/1lb golden marzipan
- 3 tbsp apricot jam
- 1 free-range egg, beaten

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 160C/140C Fan/Gas 3. Grease a 20cm/8in round, deep-sided, loose-bottomed tin with butter and line the base with baking paper.

2. Put the cake ingredients into a large bowl and beat together until well incorporated. Spoon half the mixture into the prepared tin and level the surface.

3. Roll one-third of the marzipan to the same size as the base of the tin and place on top of the cake mixture.

4. Spoon the remaining cake mixture on top of the marzipan and level the surface. Bake for 1¾-2 hours or until golden-brown on top and firm in the middle. If the cake is beginning to brown but not cooked through cover it with tin foil. Leave the cake to cool for 10 minutes before removing from the tin.

5. Heat the apricot jam in a pan, then brush the top of the cooled cake with a little warm jam. Roll out half of the remaining marzipan to fit the top of the cake. Place the marzipan on the cake and use your thumb to crimp around the edges.

6. Make 11 balls from the remaining marzipan and place these around the edge of the cake fixing them to the marzipan with a little beaten egg.

7. Brush the marzipan with the egg and glaze under a hot grill for about 5 minutes (turning the cake round to ensure even browning). You can do this using a cook's blowtorch if you prefer.

Fun for children

GET CRAFTY FOR EASTER!

Here are a couple of creative ideas to keep our younger readers busy over the Easter break.

Perfect for Easter egg hunts

THIS Easter basket craft recycles junk-cupboard materials into an Easter container which you can display and fill with Easter eggs. It is low cost, quick and easy to make and can be used for Easter egg hunts.

You will need:

- A plastic basket (*the type that pre-packed vegetables come in*)
- Craft foam in a colour to match the basket.
- Easter stickers or pre-cut shapes
- Glue
- Green paper (*optional*)

Instructions:
Cut a strip of craft foam and glue the ends to either side of the basket. Decorate the basket with stickers or foam shapes. Cut thin strips of green paper to make "grass" as a base for your precious Easter eggs, if you like.

A cute and easy Easter bunny

THIS cup and ball bunny is so cute and very quick to make as an Easter craft. If you use a white cup and ball it won't even need painting.

You will need:

- Polystyrene ball
- Paper cup
- White paint
- White and pink craft foam
- Pink pompom
- Wiggle eyes
- Glue
- Pink heart or circle sticker
- Pink pen
- Double sided tape

Instructions:
Paint the ball and the cup white and leave to dry. Glue the ball to the bottom of the cup.

Cut two white ears from craft foam. Fold over a small piece at the end of each ear and attach the ears to the ball with double sided tape.

From pink foam cut two inner ears and glue these to the centre of the ears.

From white foam cut two paws and glue these to the front of the cup.

Glue a pink pompom to the back of the cup as the tail. Stick the pink sticker on to the ball for a nose and stick on the two wiggle eyes.

Finish off by drawing on some whiskers with pink pen.

Easter Colouring Competition

Your name:

.....

.....

Age: .....

Name of parent or guardian:

.....

.....

Phone number:

.....

Address:

.....

.....

.....

.....

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The closing date for entries is 30 April 2017.

Send your entries to Leys News, 26 Kingfisher Green, Greater Leys, Oxford OX4 7BX

Hurrah for the Easter holidays!

I EXPECT you are all very excited that you now have some time off school and to make things even better – it is also Easter!

Hopefully the weather will now be getting much better and this means everyone can get out and about and enjoy the great outdoors. I know that the Leys is starting to look very pretty with blossom and daffodils popping up, making the perfect opportunity for some nature walks and Easter egg hunts!

Please do get in touch and let us know what you get up to and send us any photos or pictures of any plants, animals, trees or flowers – or anything else that you find while you are our and about this month.

We have a couple of simple, fun craft activities to keep you busy so let us know how you get on! This month we also have two great competitions for you to enter – you have the chance to snap up tickets to a great production at The Oxford Playhouse and to win a great colouring set in our Easter art competition.

Have a great month and don't forget to email us. We love to hear your news, read stories and poems and see photos and pictures that you create.

Happy Easter!
Love from Sarah x

editor@leysnews.co.uk

Richidea's entry.

Erin's entry.

Competition Winners

Colouring Competition: Congratulations to Richidea Carlos Lay, age 7, from Greater Leys and Erin Zulkifli, age 10, from Blackbird Leys who both won last issue's Valentine colouring competition. They will both receive a colouring set and other prizes.

Fantastic Mr Fox: Winner of the Fantastic Mr Fox Competition was Jennifer Cadle of Greater Leys. Jennifer wins family tickets to see the production at The Oxford Playhouse.

OXFORD PLAYHOUSE: Win family tickets to Room on the Broom

WE ARE giving away family tickets for the forthcoming show at the Oxford Playhouse for Room on the Broom for Thursday 1 June at 1.30pm.

Join the Witch and her cat on their mission to defeat the dragon in Tall Stories' magical, musical adaptation of the classic picture book by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler.

The Witch and her cat are travelling on their broomstick when they pick up some hitch-hikers – a friendly dog, a beautiful green bird and a crazy frog. But this broomstick's not meant for five and – CRACK – it snaps in two, just as the hungry dragon appears! Songs, laughs and scary fun for children aged 3 and up and their grown-ups, in the Olivier Award-nominated show that's toured Britain and the world!

To win a set of Family tickets (four tickets up to two adults and ice creams) simply answer the following question:
Who is travelling with the Witch on her broom in the picture
A) An Elephant
B) A Snake
C) A Cat

Please email you answer to: officemanager@leysnews.co.uk and be sure to include your full name, address and contact phone number.

Alternatively, you can post your entry to Room on a Broom competition, Leys News, 26 Kingfisher Green, Oxford OX4 7BX
Closing date for entries is 11 May 2017.
Age Guidelines: 3+. Usual Terms and Conditions apply and the editor's decision is final.

St Georges Day

BY SUZAN CROXFORD

ST GEORGES Day is England's National Day and is celebrated every year on 23 April . Fervent English fans mark the day up and down the country with parades, dancing and waving flags from buildings. Some people wear England's national flower, a rose, in their lapel. Legend has it that St George slayed a dragon and saved a princess.

Now days we mostly spend this national day going about our ordinary business. However I do use it as an opportunity to make some quintessentially English food and in our house this means toad in the hole with piles of creamy mash followed by the most brilliant of British puddings, the humble Bread and Butter pudding.

We make them in individual dishes to avoid arguments over portion size, but you could of course make one large pudding.

Traditionally this transforms a stale loaf into our well known comforting, British pudding. Here we use Brioche to give a distinctly richer experience, layered up with rich vanilla custard, chocolate and orange marmalade. Almost too good to be true.

Bread and butter pudding

Serves six
Pre-heat oven to 180 deg c

Ingreadients
200g plain chocolate drops
3 tbsps butter
4 tbsps orange marmalade
1 Brioche loaf
3 eggs
300ml milk
300ml single cream
2 tbsps demerara sugar

Method
Lightly grease your dishes. Melt the chocolate with the marmalade and butter. Spread over the Brioche slices and arrange, overlapping in a dish or dishes.

Beat the eggs with the milk and cream and gently pour over the Brioche slices, sprinkle evenly with sugar on the top. Leave to stand for a few minutes to soak up the liquid, adding more until it is all used up.

Bake in a bain marie (a baking tray filled with boiling water that comes half way up the dish will suffice) for 30–40 minutes at 180 deg c.

PET HATES

You can bank on it! (not)

BY ALAN WITTON

I'VE JUST spent half an hour as the unwilling guest of one of my unfavourite institutions, a High Street bank. Its name will not be quoted here, to protect the guilty, and also because their lawyers probably earn much more than I do! (And, if they have as many disgruntled customers as I think, their lawyers earn every last penny of their corn!)

I rang the bank to enquire about the renewal of my credit card. Apparently they would not renew the card automatically, as I hadn't been using it regularly in recent years.

Which, I suppose, is fair enough. To my surprise I got through to the right person almost straightaway, and to my greater surprise he was helpfulness itself. Right, he said, all you need to do is visit a branch of the bank and take with you two items of personal ID.

A passport and an official letter addressed to you will do fine, he said. And that was where the fun started.

Rounding up my passport and a suitable letter, I called on the bank. The first shock was that the receptionist's desk was unoccupied, with a sign saying "please go to the cashiers with all enquiries".

So I reluctantly joined a queue for the cashiers. There were two cashiers on duty, both busy with customers who looked as if they meant to stay for some time. I didn't. How wrong I was.

When I finally got to the cashier, I stated my problem as lucidly as I could. Ten minutes and a couple of conversations with her supervisor later, she had finally got the message that it was a credit card, not a debit card, that I wished to renew. "Oh", she said, "why don't you ring the helpline?" I explained, with fast-diminishing reserves of patience, that I had already done that, and they had told me to visit a branch with two items of ID. "Oh", she said.

Another, rather longer, conversation with her supervisor followed. "I'm sorry", she said, "we can't do this straightaway, please take a seat and I'll come out to you". I hastened to comply.

Fifteen minutes later (admittedly the seat was fairly comfortable) I was summoned into one of those cubbyholes reserved for difficult customers. I was told that the transaction had not yet gone through due, believe it or not, to shortage of telephone lines.

They still had my passport and the old (expiring) credit card, and I wasn't willing to leave without these two essential items. Two minutes later, passport and card were miraculously returned and I was told the transaction was almost complete. I was free to leave, and was told the new card should appear within 5-10 days. I'll let you know.

In the meantime I have one suggestion, not just for this bank but for all banks. Every cashier should have a sign facing them inside their windows – Other Brands Are Available!

Blackbird Leys to get share of £745,000 Government boost for regeneration

BLACKBIRD LEYS and Barton are to receive a £745,000 Government cash boost to help fund regeneration projects.

The grant is from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to support the delivery of regeneration in Barton and Blackbird Leys.

The grant, split between £410,000 for Blackbird Leys and £335,000 for Barton, is intended to support the necessary feasibility, master-planning, legal, and procurement work to deliver the schemes.

The two Oxford estates were part of more than 100 housing estates across the country that received cash from the DCLG's £32 million Estate Regeneration Fund. The money is to be used to speed up regeneration schemes in their early stages, help address problems that hold up projects, and give local authorities access to skills to ensure high-quality regeneration.

Last year, Oxford City Council launched a £3.9 million 'Investing in Barton' regeneration project to improve the blocks of flats and Neighbourhood Centre, enhance the street environment, and improve security. Design options for the redevelopment of Underhill Circus – the face of the community - are being considered and additional funds will be invested to carry this work forward.

The City Council also plans to carry forward the redevelopment of Blackbird Leys district centre to regenerate the area and provide new housing. The regeneration will refresh the physical environment and create greater vitality and attractive public space at the heart of the Leys community, which is home to some 13,100 residents.

Councillor Mike Rowley, Board Member for Housing, said: "I'm pleased that we've successfully bid for this grant, which will help us to move forward with preparatory work for the regeneration of Blackbird Leys. With the new funds, we can also look at the next stages for the regeneration of Barton and consider renewal opportunities for the area, such as maximising the use of underutilised land."

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid said: "For too long a number of housing estates across the country have been areas characterised by low-quality homes and high social deprivation. This government is determined to have a housing market that works for everyone. That's why we're turbocharging the regeneration of these rundown estates, so they can thrive as communities."

Housing and Planning Minister Gavin Barwell said: "Our housing white paper set out ambitious proposals to help fix the broken housing market and to encourage good design. Estates regeneration must be locally-led, and this £32 million fund will help breathe new life into estates throughout the country. It will help more ordinary working people have the security of a decent place to live."

Become a City Rep and get a chance to travel overseas

OXFORD City Council is launching a new scheme to encourage young people to get involved in Oxford's international links activities.

Oxford is twinned with five cities – Perm in Russia, Leiden in the Netherlands, Bonn in Germany, Leòn in Nicaragua, and Grenoble in France – and the city council is looking for 10 people, aged 18 to 25, to represent them and help raise awareness and engagement amidst their peers.

City Representatives, or City Reps, will gain invaluable skills working alongside industry professionals, such as web developers Made With Joy, and Oxford International Links (OIL), a keen supporter of the scheme.

City Reps will have the chance to travel to the city they will represent whilst learning to fundraise for their trips abroad. They will create a website containing accounts of their own travel experience, guides to all five twin cities as well as an event calendar for all twinning activities. They will also put together a launch event as part of Oxford Christmas Light Festival which, this year, will be themed 'The World In Oxford'.

To become a City Rep young people must prepare and submit either 200 words, 10 photographs or a 90 seconds video to show why they are interested and why they would make a great representative.

Peter McQuitty, Head of Culture, said: "The City Council is investing in improving opportunities for young people to engage in positive activities and develop the skills and ambition to achieve to the best of their abilities.

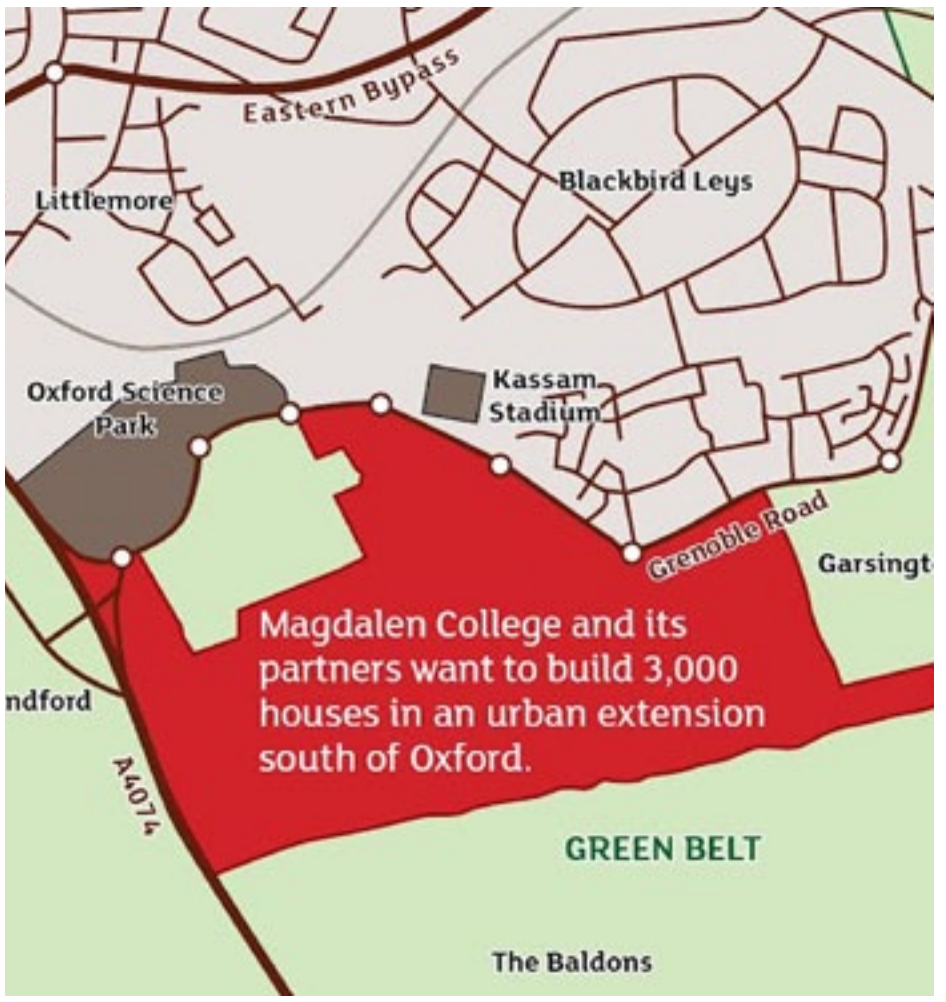
"The City Rep scheme will help young people develop their digital, fundraising, communication, and event management skills, as well as building their self-confidence, provide opportunities to develop friendships and expand their cultural horizons."

■ **Applications open Wednesday 29 March and close on Thursday 27 April and should be emailed to internationallinks@oxford.gov.uk.**

■ **For more information, applicants can contact International Links Coordinator Lauren Spiceley, using the same email address or calling 07483 010888.**

Help save the Oxford Green Belt

Campaigners call on residents to help save countryside



THE Council for the Protection of Rural England is calling on local people to object to plans to build thousands of homes on Oxford Green Belt south of the city. Magdalen College and its partners are trying to build 3,000 houses as part of a Science Village but the CPRE claims this is will result in "a huge urban extension."

The developers claim they will deliver some affordable houses, but campaigners say they are unlikely to be affordable to many local people.

A spokesman for the CPRE said: "This is just the tip of the iceberg. Brasenose College would like to follow suit by building another 2,000 houses on adjacent land to the east."

The CPRE is concerned about the potential loss of countryside and traffic congestion - 3,000 extra houses south of the City will mean thousands more people trying to get down the Cowley Road or on to the busy A4074 each day.

The spokesman added: "According to the World Health Organisation Oxford is already one of the most polluted cities in the UK, with the Cowley Centre a 'hot spot'. How will the health issues be considered? Only some of the new houses will be 'affordable' - but the developers won't come clean on how many, whether any will be social housing or permanently affordable, or whether they just mean 20% off the market value. The truth is this housing is unlikely to meet local need, but be aimed at commuters from London and elsewhere. The development would extend the Science Park - but the existing Science Park isn't close to being full."

Landowner, Magdalen College is set to make millions of pounds from using its land for development. The CPRE is asking for developers to look at alternatives and to build more houses in the City, and build at a higher density – if houses were built at a higher density, less land would be needed. The campaigners also want developers to find more sustainable locations – the proposed development lies in South Oxfordshire; South Oxfordshire District Council objects to the urban extension and is looking for a more sustainable location outside the Green Belt.

■ **To find out more about the planning proposal go to www.oxfordsciencevillage.com**

■ **Sign up to CPRE Oxfordshire's e-newsletter to stay posted on when the planning application comes forward and how to object: http://www.cpreoxon.org.uk/join-us/take-action**

■ **To email the President of Magdalen College, Professor Sir David Clary, to tell him your views: email david.clary@magd.ox.ac.uk**

■ **Find out more at: cpreoxon.org.uk Or email for more information at: administrator@cpreoxon.org.uk**

BLACKBIRD LEYS LEARNING CENTRE UPDATE

Learn New Skills

OVER the past two months, we have been running a number of courses throughout the week from our base here at Blackbird Leys Library.

Learners have got to grips with computers and the Internet, learned new skills in job seeking and writing CVs, and it has been great getting to know people and making stuff happen here on The Leys.

Shazia Abass has now joined the team as the new Community Development Officer and you can find her at the library reception area from Monday to Friday 9am–5pm. This means that it is much easier to get hold of us, as you can now drop in anytime during these hours and talk to us about learning opportunities that you would like us to put on locally or enrol on one of our upcoming courses.

Blackbird Leys Learning Centre is part of Oxfordshire Adult Learning which is provided by Abingdon and Witney College.

We are running four free workshops which are:

- **Job Interview Skills**
  Monday 24 April, 10am–1pm, at Blackbird Leys Library
- **A Beginners Guide to Using Mobiles, Tables and IPads**
  Tuesday 25 April, 3pm–6pm, at Blackbird Leys Library
- **Touch Typing**
  Monday 15 May, 1pm–4pm, at Blackbird Leys Library
- **Study Skills**
  Friday 12 May, 1pm–4pm, at Blackbird Leys Library

Newspaper and Discussion Group

We are starting a new drop in Newspaper and Discussion Group which will take place on Friday mornings, 10am–12.30pm, beginning 28 April at Blackbird Leys Library.

Short courses that are available:

- **Confidence Building/ Knowing Me!** Tuesdays 1pm–3pm, starting 2 May, for five weeks.
- **Introduction to Community Development**
  Tuesdays 10am–12.30pm, starting 25 April, for five weeks
- **Get Started using Spreadsheets**
  Tuesdays 6pm–8.30pm, starting 2 May for four weeks
- **Get started Word Processing**
  Mondays 6pm–6.30pm, starting 8 May for four weeks.

We are also setting up an Introduction to Working with Children course, which will take place at Oxford Academy School.

■ **For more information about any of our courses and tasters, all of which are free of charge, get in touch by calling 01235 216447, emailing Sasha.East@abingdon-witney.ac.uk, or you can pop in to the library to see us.**

Homeless charity completes African studies course

RESIDENTS and staff at Oxford Homeless Charity, Emmaus Oxford, have completed a five-week course of African studies. The course has been taught by Natty Mark Samuels from East Oxford, a well-known community face, who is also a teacher and youth worker.

The course, using a variety of teaching methods including poetry, has focused on pre-colonial African history. Mr Samuels said: "When people think of Africa, it is with a westernised view point, and little is known about the rich language, diversity of its people, and the importance of its standing in pre-colonial trade routes."

The course has run on Monday evenings at the Emmaus Community building, in Temple Cowley. The Emmaus Charity houses 28 formerly homeless men and women, and runs one of the largest second hand stores in the county.

The two-hour sessions have seen students take part in a variety of activities, including group discussions and storytelling. Isis Howes, a resident, said: "I found the course to be unique, and not what I expected."

Gerrie Smee, Deputy Community Leader said: "Natty Mark Samuel's teaching style is very energetic, and full of enthusiasm, which takes you along on a journey. It has been a real joy to have this happen at Emmaus, and we hope to have him back in the future as everyone feels they have gained something from the lessons. I hope that Abingdon and Witney College manage to secure future funding for this course, as we have been the last group to have the opportunity."

THE WILDLIFE GARDEN

BY STUART MABUTT

Take a look up

NOW the temperatures are improving, I see many more heads bobbing up and down over the garden fences as more people get out and enjoy their gardens in all their forms.

How aware are we though of the nature and the actual environment around us? Many of the gardens I see around have trees in them, but how many of us really spend time looking up in the canopy? There's often a whole new world of life up there, bathed in dappled sunlight as the wind rocks and sways the branches.

A whole range of different insects regularly call tree canopies home, and they often differ from those you find on the ground, enjoying your flowers, plants and crops with you.

The initial burst of life in Spring of our garden blue tits as they pair up, mate, have young which hopefully fledge, is followed by what seems silence as they disappear. They haven't though as these Tit families climb into the canopy of trees and gorge themselves on the insects and caterpillars that inhabit that space. So after the current breeding season is complete, look upwards and see if you can spot these family groups.

Maybe do a quick survey and see if different species of birds, not just the blue tits, prefer different species of trees. So the message of this piece is get out and enjoy your garden, local park, or even woodland. Remember to look upward too. Nature is all around.

Happy Gardening.

FREE courses at BLITZ

The BLITZ IT hub is offering free courses to help people who live in the Leys to improve their IT and computer skills. Complete beginners welcome.

IT Beginners: Tuesdays, 9.30–11.45am.
Six sessions staring Tuesday 25 April and ending 30 May.

IT Improvers: Mondays, 9.30–11.45am, and Thursdays, 12.30–2.45pm.
Six sessions starting Monday 8 May and ending Thursday 25 May.

IT Bridge: Thursdays, 9.30–11.45am.
Ten sessions starting 27 April and ending 6 July. (No session on 1 June)

Call us on 01865 806453 or drop in and see us in Blackbird Leys Community Centre

Skills Funding Agency · Oxfordshire County Council · Oxford Brookes University · Blackbird Leys Parish Council

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ararchildminding@gmail.com

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Garsington Road, OX4 6NG
☎ 01865 395999 or 712800

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☎ 01865 775849

Dominos Pizza
57 Between Towns Road, OX4 3LR.
☎ 01865 777137

Cafe Spice
98/98a The Parade, Rose Hill, OX4 4HX
☎ 01865 747575
info@cafespiceoxford.co.uk

Papa John's Pizza
80 Rose Hill, Oxford, OX4 4HS.
☎ 01865 402050

Pizza Hut
3 Courtlands Rd, Rose Hill,
OX4 4HS.
☎ 01865 236116

Pizza Polo
34 Cowley Rd, Littlemore, OX4 4LD.
☎ 01865 425630

FLORISTS

Joe Austin
174 Cowley Road, OX4 6NQ.
☎ 01865 792037

GARDENS

The Garden
99–100 The Market, OX1 3YD.
☎ 01865 240709

Acorn Nursery
Stadhampton, Oxford.
☎ 01865 891663

Oxford Garden Centres
South Hinksey, OX1 5AR.
☎ 01865 326066

Pathway Workshop
Dunnock Way, OX4 7EF.
☎ 01865 714111

Wyevale Garden Centre
Suthern-By-Pass, Oxford.
☎ 01865 326066

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Air Link Oxford
24 Vicarage Close, OX4 2NH.
☎ 01865 434040

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Regus, 7200 The Quorum, OX4 2JZ.
☎ 01865 406070

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MRF
37 Green Hill, OX4 7UD.
☎ 01865 777889

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☎ 01865 773486

CALLING ALL SPORTSMEN AND WOMEN!

Would you like your sporting achievements featured in Leys News?

Email us at editor@leysnews.co.uk or call 01865 711756

Take a break in the Isle of Wight

A FEW spaces are still available for a trip to the Isle of Wight on May 25 for five days. Price is £209 which includes local pick ups from Blackbird Leys, Cowley Centre and Iffley Road. The holiday includes breakfast and evening meal, entertainment and bingo every night. There are optional day tours. There are also beverages served en-route with bingo and raffle on board. There is one double room and two single rooms still available.

■ **For more information ring 07754 217128.**

WHAT'S ON IN THE LEYS

A quick guide to what's available locally. If you have a service or event you'd like to include, please ring 01865 711756

ADVICE

■ **Agnes Smith Advice Centre**
96 Blackbird Leys Road. Gives free independent and impartial debt advice and counselling.
Drop-in sessions: Mondays, 10am–12pm and Fridays, 10am–12pm.
Also in the Farmhouse,
Tues and Thurs, 10am–12pm.
☎ 01865 770206

■ **Young People's Jobshop**
Every Wednesday, 1.30–3pm at the Early Intervention Blackbird Leys Young People Centre. Ages 16–19.
Speak to an advisor for FREE one-to-one advice.

■ **Leys Job Club**
Free support for anyone who would like help with learning or training, or would like to consider a new job, or taking up work for the first time.
Sessions are held at the Youth and Community Centre every Wednesday from 10am–12pm. Just drop in.
Other job club sessions are held in the Children's Centre, please call for details.
☎ Call or text, 0793 1400 108

CHILDREN

■ **New Baby Group**
Inc. Breastfeeding Café
Wednesdays, 1pm–2.30pm at Leys Children's Centre, Cuddesdon Corner.
☎ Contact Mikko Enticknap for Baby Group and Camille Kalaja for Breastfeeding Café
01865 773263

■ **Blackbird Leys Youth Centre**
Blackbird Leys Road. Variety of activities and advice for young people.
☎ 01865 772886.

■ **BLAP Afterschool Club**
Outdoor and indoor activities for yrs 8–13 in a structured environment.
3.15–5.30pm. £1.50 per session
☎ 07530933690 and 01865 236646
blap76@yahoo.co.uk

■ **Maluchy group**
For Polish speaking families with children ages 0–5 years. Second Saturday in the month, 10.15am–11.45am, at Children's Centre, Cuddesdon Corner, Cuddesdon Way.
☎ Agata, 07874 187 704

■ **Brownies**
Holy Family Church Hall.
☎ Jennifer Pleass, 07886 757338
bblbrownies@gmail.com

■ **35th Oxford Scout Group**
☎ Duncan Bowler,
0776 6293353

DOVECOTE AFTERSCHOOL CLUB
Runs Tuesday to Thursday, 3.30–5.15pm, £1.30 per session.
☎ 01865 712299
and 07974 234661

■ **Oxfordshire (The Rifles) Battalion Army Cadet Force**
Thursdays, 7.30–9.30pm at Sandy Lane West. Boys and girls ages 13 to 18.
☎ 01869 259681

■ **Mother and Toddler Bounce**
Trampoline Sessions suitable for mothers and toddlers held on Thursdays, 10.30–11.30am. Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre.
☎ Fiona, 07891 419793

■ **Strawbery Fayre Majorettes**
Training every Wednesday at the Barn in Nightingale Avenue, Greater Leys, 6.30–8.45pm.
☎ Eleen Filer, 01865 717781

■ **Teenage Rounders Class**
Tuesdays, 4–5pm
£1.20. For 14–18 year olds Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre

■ **Rainbows**
For girls aged 5–7 years.
Fridays during term time, 5.30–6.30pm, at the Holy Family Church Hall on Cuddesdon Way.
☎ Alexandra, 07804 500313

■ **Air Cadets**
Mon and Wed, 7.30–9.30pm,
Sandy Lane West.
Boys and girls aged 12½ to 20 years.
☎ 01865 777055
oc.2210@aircadets.org

EDUCATION

■ **Able Centre**
Cuddesdon Way. Free courses in Maths and English.
☎ Nicky, 01865 7286

BLACKBIRD LEYS LIBRARY
Cuddesdon Way.
Books, DVDs, audio books, use of computers for adults and children, photocopying etc.
Opening times:
Mon, Wed, Thur: 9am–12pm and 1.30–5pm
Tue: 9am–12pm
Sat: 9.30am–12.30pm
Friday Closed.
☎ 01865 770403

LEISURE

■ **The Oxford Community Choir**
All welcome.
☎ Hannah, 07512 364367
hannah

■ **Irish dancing**
Sacred Heart Hall. Weds and Thurs, 5pm.

■ **Blackbird Leys Bowls Club**
Cuddesdon Way. The Club is looking for new members. Open night every Tuesday from 6pm.
☎ David Buckwell, 01865 881735
or Gordon Roper, 01865 361047

■ **Girls Football (15+)**
Mondays, 6.30pm. FREE.
☎ Marc Fleckney, 07920 463623
Mafleckney@gmail.com

■ **Indoor Bowls Club**
Sandy Lane West. Club is looking for new members and invites men, women, boys and girls of all ages and abilities.
☎ 01865 775891
or email oxbowls1@yahoo.co.uk

LEYS POOLS AND LEISURE CENTRE
Opening Hours
Monday to Friday: 6am–10pm
Saturday: 6am–8pm
Sunday: 8am–8pm
Bank Holiday: 7am–8pm
Pegasus Road, Blackbird Leys, Oxford, OX4 6JL
☎ 0844 893 3222

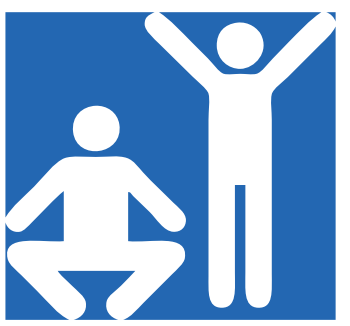
OXFORD UNITED EDUCATION AND FOOTBALL ACADEMY
Still spaces available for our Education and Football course for boys and girls aged 16–19.
Please email Chad for more details.
01865 336138
chadwoollands@oxfordunitedlearning.co.uk
www.oulfc.co.uk

OLDER PEOPLE

■ **Walking Football**
Oxford City FC, Saturdays, 10–11am.
Waking football, does what is says on the tin! Football but no running allowed.
£3.50.
Anna McKay, 01235 849403
annamckay@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk

■ **Monday & Friday Lunch Club**
Frys Court, 2 Nightingale Avenue,
OX4 7WJ.
☎ Anne Appleton, 422231

■ **Over 60s Bingo Club**
Wednesdays 1–3pm
Blackbird Leys Bowls Club
☎ David Stonehill 01865 777074
or Anne Ranger 01865 430504



WELLBEING

■ **Skiptrix Fitness Class**
Get fit, tone and lose weight.
Thursdays, 6.30–7.15pm at the Ark T Centre, Cowley.
Satudays, 10–10.45am at the Barn, BBLeys. £4 per class.
☎ Trish, 07957754355
trishwisdom@yahoo.co.uk

■ **Yoga For All**
Experienced Yoga teacher.
☎ Linda Highland, 01865 432570

■ **ZUMBA Fitness Party**
Tues, 6.30–7.30pm at The Oxford Academy School, Sandy Lane West.
☎ 07714 248177 zumbasarahoxford@gmail.com www.zumbasarahoxford.com

■ **The Listening Centre**
Counselling service based at Cuddesdon Corner Family Centre.
☎ 01865 794794

■ **Oxfordshire Mind**
Short courses, groups and other support are available for anyone with a mental health problem. To find out more drop in to the Cowley Wellbeing Centre in St James' Hall, 26 Between Towns Road.
☎ 01865 247788

■ **Tai Chi & Qigong**
Class every Thursday morning 9.45–10.45am. Ark T Centre, Crowell Road, Cowley. £5 and £6. First class half price.
☎ 07974185554

■ **Rosewood Club**
for people with dementia
Open weekdays, 9.30am–3pm. Providing a stimulating, enjoyable and social day while your family carer gets a well-earned break. £12 per day all inclusive, plus a transport charge if used.
☎ To arrange an informal visit call Julie Perks 749349 or email rosewood@daybreak-oxford.org.uk

■ **Survivors**
Fridays and Saturdays, Blackbird Leys Community Centre, 9.30am–3pm.
A self-help group of people who use or have used Mental Health Services, working together to get support or to share experiences. Lunch available for £1.
☎ 07729 581975

■ **MYOX4**
Community recovery project for individuals wishing to achieve and maintain abstinence from drugs and alcohol also promoting healthy lifestyles and wellbeing with free and confidential advice and support.
9 Knights Rd, Blackbird Leys, Oxford. OX4 6HU
☎ 01865 778163
E: seanqualter.lifeline@gmail.com
facebook: www.facebook.com/LifelineOxfordService

NOTICES

THE LEYS WI

Meets the first Wednesday of each month, 7.30pm, at The Clockhouse. All ladies aged 18 or over are welcome to attend. Next meeting will be on 3 May.

☎ 0 7973 336 041
W: www.theleyswi.moonfruit.com
E: theleyswi@yahoo.co.uk

SOCIALIST PARTY MEETING

Last Tuesday of every month at Leys Links Centre, Blackbird Leys Road. Starts 7.30pm
☎ 0208 9888777

THE CLOCKHOUSE COMMUNITY CENTRE

● **Tea-Time Social**
Every Monday (*except Easter break 10 and 17 April*).
Enjoy a cup of tea and a chat, plus board games if you want. 1.30–3.30pm. £1. Now includes a chance to play Boccia – like indoor bowls – come and try!

● **Age UK drop-in**
Next one: Monday 24 April, 2–3.30pm. Friendly information and help on over-50s services and activities in Oxford.

● **Wordsmiths of War**
FREE World War II course with local historian Natty Mark. Every Monday, 11am–12pm. Explore the international/British black community's contribution, through the eyes and ears of accredited black journalists and their inspiring stories during those turbulent times. Share your family stories of WWII.

● **Dance**
11am–12pm, £2. Beginners and seated dancers very welcome. No partners needed. To find out date of next one call 01865 395908

● **Over-50s advice**
FREE. Monday, 24 April. Book appointments 10am–12pm. Tel: 395908.

● **Yoga**
Every Tuesday, 10–11am (*except Easter break 11 and 18 April*). £2.

● **Singing for Fun**
Every Tuesday (except Easter break, 11 and 18 April).
1.30–3.30pm. FREE. (*NOW FULL, but phone: 395908 to express your interest.*)

● **Wednesday Crafts**
Weekly 11 am – 12.30 pm. Bring your knitting, crochet, sewing or drawing/colouring and join us for a natter. £1

● **Tai Chi**
Every Thursday 10-11 am (*except Easter break 13+20 April*). £2. Boost your flexibility, improve your fitness and have fun!

● **Art Group**
Potters Court, Robin Place, Greater Leys OX4 7FF.
Next one is Thursday 20 April.
All sessions 2–4 pm. £1 includes materials.

● **Gardening Club**
£2. Adults of all ages welcome at these monthly meetings! For future meetings call 01865 395908

● **Evening Socials**
Adults of all ages welcome!
Weds 26 April: Quiz Night. 7–9pm. £2.

● **Computer courses**
Beginners welcome! FREE. Tel: 395908.

● **Leys WI**
First Wednesday of month, 7.30-9.30pm. We welcome all women over 16 for a couple of free visits. Hope you'll enjoy it and become a member. Email: theleyswi@yahoo.co.uk or c/o Tel: 395908.

● **Daybreak's**
Rosewood Club: Fun, sociable and stimulating days for people with dementia, and a break for their carers. £15 a day (including a hot two-course meal) plus a transport charge if used. Tel: 749349 for details or to book an initial visit.

Volunteer car drivers needed!
Help Leys residents with mobility difficulties to reach Clockhouse Project activities. Tel: 395908 for details.

About us
The Clockhouse Project works with/for over-50s living in the Leys area. It's part of local charity Leys Community Development Initiative (Leys CDI). The Clockhouse building is supported by Catalyst, GreenSquare, and A2Dominion, to benefit the local community.

■ **The Clockhouse Community Centre, Long Ground, Greater Leys OX4 7FX (*look for the clocks on the roof*) ☎ 01865 395908 E: clockhousecdi@btconnect.com**

BLACKBIRD LEYS COMMUNITY CENTRE

● **Credit Union**
Community financial service for savings and low cost loans
Opening Times: Mondays 11am–1pm, Tuesdays 7–7.30pm, Wednesdays 10am–12pm, Fridays 3–5pm
☎ 01865 718503

● **Blackbird Leys Community Centre is a Wi-Fi Hotspot**
To use the free Wi-Fi please select 'Oxford Free Wi-Fi'

● **Early Intervention Service**
Early intervention and specialist services for children, young people and families
☎ 01865 816202

● **Home-Start**
Family support charity for under 5s.
☎ 01865 779991

● **Soundworks**
Music studio and production
☎ 01865 401585

● **IT HUB**
IT Hub open access drop in sessions.
Tuesdays 12–3pm
and Fridays 9am–12pm.

● **Leys CDI Youth Project**
After School Club and Arts Award Project, Mondays, 3.30–8pm
Battlefield of the Mind (Young women's project), Tuesdays, 3.30–7.30pm
Diversionary Project, Wednesdays, 12–8pm
Afterschool Club and Tech Fridays (starting in March), Fridays, 3.30–8pm
☎ 01865 395927

● **LITZ**
IT courses and trainings for all abilities. Course details available in the Centre reception.
☎ 01865 806453

JACK ARGENT ROOM

● **SR Oxford Survivors**
Self-help community group for over 16s. Fridays and Saturdays, 10.30am–2.30pm
☎ Trish, 07824 644874

● **Oxford Polish Association**
Mondays, 6–9pm
☎ For dates contact Ewa, 07585 442696

● **FriendLeys**
Community coffee morning, £2.50, includes refreshments, Wednesdays, 10.30am–1pm
☎ 01865 402070

● **Blackbird Leys Choir**
New members always welcome.
Wednesdays, 6.30pm–9pm
☎ 07775 945279

SPORTS HALL

● **Boxing Club**
Juniors and Seniors.
☎ For details contact Tony, 01865 432995

● **GKR Karate**
Children (five Years to Adults)
☎ Stuart, 07852 292255

● **Kick Boxing & Self Defence**
7-16 yrs Tuesday 4-5pm Thursday 4.30-5.30pm Saturdays 12-1pm
16 yrs+ Tuesday 5-6pm Saturday 1-2pm
☎ 07518 502920

ROOMS AVAILABLE FOR HIRE

IT Hub: 12 networked PCs with fast wired internet connection, ceiling mounted projector and air conditioning.

Jack Argent Room: Seating for up to 60 people.

Sports Hall: Space for a wide range of activities.

First Floor Meeting Room: For up to ten people.

For more details contact Jayne on 01865 402070

■ **Blackbird Leys Community Centre**
Blackbird Leys Road, Blackbird Leys, OX4 6HW
T: 01865 402070
E: blackbirdleyscommcentre@oxford.gov.uk

LOCAL CHURCHES

■ **Church of the Holy Family**
Eucharist: Each Sunday, 10am, with children's activities.
Timeout: Reflective worship.
Most Sundays, 6.30pm.
Church Office Hour: Tuesdays 1.30-2.30pm and Thursdays 10-11am, or by appointment. For enquiries, hall bookings, wedding arrangements.
☎ Revd Heather Carter, 01865 778728
www.holyfamilybbl.co.uk

■ **Chrisco Ministries**
Meets at Jack Agent Room at the BBL Community Centre, Sundays, 11am–2pm
☎ 07533 845714 and 07737 564677

■ **Christian Harvest Ministries**
Meets at the Jack Argent Room at BBL Community Centre, Sundays, 3–5.30pm.
☎ Rev Alice Kinyanjui, 01865 701129

■ **Redeem Christian Church of God**
Meets at theSacred Heart, Sawpit Road.
Sunday Service: 2.30–5pm
Bible study: Wednesdays: 6–8pm, except last Friday of month.
☎ 07825 679044 www.RCCGLighthouse.co.uk

■ **Leys Community Church**
Now meets at Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground, Blackbird Leys Road.
☎ Andy and Nicci Longmore, 01865 779700
www.leyscommunitychurch.org.uk

■ **Sacred Heart Catholic Church**
Balfour Road, Blackbird Leys.
Sunday Masses: 9.30am, with music and children's liturgy; and at 6pm.
☎ 01865 776903

■ **Seventh Day Adventist Church**
1A Chester St, off Iffley Road.
Saturday first service: 9.45–11am.
Second service: 11.15am–12.30pm.
www.freebible.org.uk

■ **Mount Zion Ministries Oxford**
Glow Hall, Blackbird Leys Community Centre.
Sunday Service: 11am–1.30pm.
All night prayers: Fridays, 7–9pm.
Bible Study: Sundays, 11am–12pm.
☎ Rev Chris Ugwu, 07877 536406, 07932 964056
E: mtzionoxford@yahoo.co.uk
www.mtzionox.org

■ **Kingsway International Christian Centre**
Sunday service: 11am–1pm, children's church runs concurrently.
Friday Prayer Meeting: 6–7pm.
The Barn, Nightingale Avenue, Greater Leys, OX4 7BU.
☎ 07951262426 **E:** admin@kiccoxford.org.uk
www.kiccoxford.org.uk

■ **Christ Embassy Oxford**
R&R Frontline Studios, Sandy lane Oxford, OX4 6LJ
Sundays, 10am–12.30pm
Wednesdays, 7pm–9pm
☎ 07984 070632 www. christembassy-oxford.org

Enjoy your garden this spring

SPRING is here and it is finally time to get out and about and enjoy the new season.

Although it is still a bit too chilly to plant out some delicate plant varieties, spring bulbs are in full bloom, filling our pots and borders with bright splashes of colour. If you didn't get around to planting any bulbs last autumn then your garden may be looking a little less than lovely, but one way to add some instant colour to a garden of any size is to buy some pots of bulbs. This is a great, speedy way to brighten up a patio, window box or balcony.

Most supermarkets and garden centres are currently selling pots crammed with the miniature Tete a Tete narcissi as well as grape hyacinths, daffodils and tulips, all very keenly priced meaning that you can introduce some much-needed colour no matter what your budget.

Pots of bulbs can either be transplanted directly into borders or put into pots and then grouped together to make eye catching displays on doorsteps, patios and even in borders to give a garden an instant facelift. You don't need to go to great expense to buy fancy pots-just see what you have available and plant them up. If you make sure the pot has good drainage so that the plants do not get waterlogged, pretty much anything can work as a container.

Old wellies, food cans, buckets and anything else works well-just remember to add drainage holes.

Small pots of bulbs also look great indoors as an alternative to a bunch of cut flowers, so bring a bit of spring colour into your home as well. Most bulbs come in plastic pots but you can swap these for terracotta pots by simply re planting and standing the pot in a saucer to catch any water.

Primroses and Polyanthus plants are in abundance and make a welcome addition to pots, troughs and hanging baskets with their seemingly endless range of vibrant colours. Prices from as little as £1 a pot in some supermarkets, these are also a great addition to any garden and, like the bulbs will come up next year too if you give them a bit of attention.

Cut daffodils and tulips are also a great way to add some spring sunshine to your home, and with bunches from as little as 95p in some supermarkets you can afford to fill jam jars, bottles and vases and have flowers in every room of your house.

The Blackbird Academy Trust and Oxford City Council invite you to take part in the

2017 Make & Bake

Saturday 8 July 2017, 12pm to 4pm, Blackbird Leys Park

Here's a preview of the categories at the Leys Festival:

Six Home-Made Delicious Cakes

Scrumptious Large Home-Made Cake

Magical Miniature Garden

Vegetable Sculpture

Photograph of the Natural World

Mysterious Potion

Home-made Chutney

Hand Picked Flowers

Aromatic Fragrance

More information to follow – Happy Making & Baking!

Ageing and living well in Oxford

HOW does your brain and body change as you get older and how do you stay healthy all that time?

As part of Dementia Awareness Week 15-21 May, Oxford scientists will be part of an event on ageing and dementia in Templars Square Shopping Centre called - Ageing: From Birth and Beyond.

Organised by Living Well Oxford and supported by a Wellcome Trust People Award, the event will offer practical advice and information on ageing and dementia as well as a chance to understand more about the science behind getting older.

The event will include hands-on activities, the chance to try workshops designed to keep your mind and body active and healthy and special offers from fashion and beauty retailers on how to change your style as you age.

Owen Acland, Centre Manger at Templars Square Shopping Centre said: "This is a fantastic opportunity for our staff and visitors. We want Templars Square Shopping Centre to become a dementia champion, an example of how a retail community can work together to be dementia friendly and support our older customers."

Our bodies change, develop and age in different ways throughout our lives, not only in our later years, so we will have content on ageing from different perspectives, and will include a variety of activities which will appeal to a range of ages.

There are 850,000 people with dementia in the UK, with numbers set to rise to over 1 million by 2025 and scientists now predict 1 in 5 people will live to over 100.

■ **More information can be found at www.facebook.com/LivingWellOxford**